

# Create Time for Your Kids

Spending time with younger children is easy because they so often want to be as much a part of our lives as possible!

## 1. Have Dinner

Make it a point to leave work or schedule work for later in the evening so that you can make it home in time to sit down to dinner together. Eating dinner as a family allows you to be a part of their daily conversations and to answer any questions they may have come across during the day when you were apart.

## 2. Fix Things Together

Is the kitchen sink broken? Do you need to paint the study room wall? Children love to help fix things. To us, it may seem like a mundane task, but to most kids, it's a wonderful chance to see what's under the kitchen sink, to understand how a faucet works and just to cover an entire wall in paint. Fixing things together allows you to plan for the project and also gives you lots of time to interact.

## 3. After Dinner Walks

If you've already made time to have dinner with your kids, why not spend another 30 minutes going on a walk with them after dinner? In Singapore, this is the coolest and most pleasant time of the day. Once the table is cleared and the dishes are washed, go for a walk around your neighbourhood. Talk about the changes you see and what your children observe around them as you go on these walks. The act of walking whilst you talk may actually make it easier for children to bring up difficult topics or problems they face because they have something else (like walking) to focus on when they bring these subjects up.

## 4. Leave a Message

Children love surprises, so if you don't have the time to see them in the morning before you leave for work, leave a short video or note for them to find. They will be thrilled to get a message from you and you will have had a chance to show that you are sorry you couldn't spend the morning with them, but that you value it so much that you made an effort to leave them a surprise note or message.

## 5. Read together

Reading to your children or even companionably reading books together for half an hour each night are a great way to spend time together. Choosing books to read and discussing them are ways to share ideas and values with your children.

## **6. Bring Your Child to School or Class**

Make it a point to bring your child to school or to any extra classes they may have. Doing this regularly allows you to spend more time together. Make travel time, together time!

## **7. Plan a Monthly Excursion**

Think of a new place to visit each month. Perhaps it's a museum? A theme park or a water adventure park? Get your children to help you to plan the excursion.

## **8. Share Family Stories**

Find time to share stories about your family's history. Dig out your old photo albums and look through them with your children. Add new pictures to the family collection together and make this a regular activity.

# Connect with Your Teenagers

As your children grow into their teenage years, spending time together becomes even more important, and at the same time, difficult. It takes a little more effort, but finding daily time for your teenagers is possible.

## 9. Conversations with Your Teen

Take the opportunity to talk to your teenager whilst you are travelling together. Whether you are travelling with your teenager on the bus, train or in the car, there usually isn't much else to do except talk. So seize the chance and get your teenager to open up and share more with you about their lives!

## 10. Do Good

Teenagers are inspired to volunteer and to make a difference in the world around them. Find a cause which you both identify with and sign up together. Attend regularly, volunteer and find time for each other too.

## 11. Step into Your Teen's World

Participate in an activity they are passionate about. Whether it happens to be cosplay or basketball or building model airplanes, talk to your teen about it. Find out if there is a way for you to be a part of it, or if that's not possible, then listen to them and learn about it from them so you can talk about it and understand why they are so excited about their chosen activity.

## 12. Chat with Your Teen

Connect with your teen through chat functions on your phone. Even though they may not necessarily want to add you on social media, sending regular short, encouraging chat messages can keep you in touch with your teen just as effectively.

## 13. Get to Know Your Teen's Friends

Teenagers are discovering the social world beyond their immediate family. They spend a lot of time with their friends, finding out who they are as individuals and learning how to socialise beyond the family. Try opening up your home and welcome your teen's friends to get to know them better.

## 14. Spend Time Each Day with Your Teen

Even if it is only 5 minutes a day, find a time which you can spend with your teen. Maybe you want to be around when they come home to say hello and to ask them how their day went. Or perhaps you make it a point to spend 5 minutes talking to them just before they go to bed and you wish each other goodnight. Find a way to have a specific and dedicated time each day for a short conversation. This way, if they ever feel that they need to speak with you about something important, they know that there is this time in the day when you will definitely be there for them.

<https://www.familiesforlife.sg/discover-an-article/Pages/30-Ways-to-Spend-More-Family-Time.aspx>

# Show Your Parents You Care

As our parents grow older and retire from their careers, they too need to know that we are there for them. With more time spent alone or at home, having family members reach out to them becomes increasingly important for their emotional and mental well-being.

## 15. Say Hello

If you don't live together, find time to call or text your parents regularly to say hello. Ask them how their day went. A few simple words can make a big difference.

## 16. Ask Your Kids to Give Grandpa and Grandma a Call

Have your children call their grandparents once in a while. Even if you visit each other often, a phone call from a grandchild is always special!

## 17. Eat Together Once a Week

Make time to visit and have a meal together every week. Depending on what your parents prefer, it could be at their home – only if your mum loves cooking, or it could be dinner out. The important thing is to spend some time together regularly.

## 18. Cook Your Family's Favourite Recipe Together

Getting together in the kitchen can be lots of fun for the young and old! Get hands-on and learn from your family's very own chef and be inspired to find out what makes the dish special to your family. Grab the opportunity to snap photos and video each step to capture those special moments.

## 19. Spend Dedicated Time Together

Whether it's a walk in the park on a Saturday morning, or accompanying your parents to the grocery store once a week, every effort to prioritise family time counts. Create an opportunity to do something exclusively together.

## 20. Learn Something New

Pick up a new hobby or activity together. Maybe you could join a tai chi or yoga class? Or pick up a new language together? Learning something new can open up new ways of communicating and bring interest and life back into your conversations with your parents.

## 21. Celebrate Family Traditions

Traditions are what keep the family and extended family closely knitted. Older family members usually have the most knowledge about how family traditions come about and the meaning behind them. Share these family traditions with the younger generation and set aside the time to follow these traditions together to create lasting memories.

# **Make Your Spouse Feel Special**

In all our daily rush, we sometimes take the person closest to us for granted. Spend time with your spouse and let them know that they are special to you in every way.

## **22. Keep in Touch with Messages**

Even when we are busy, a short note to let our spouses know that we are thinking about them and that we miss them will help to let them know that they are special and important to us.

## **23. Turn the Mobile Phone Off**

Set your mobile phone to silent or airplane mode when you are having a meal together. Give your undivided attention to each other.

## **24. Take Up a New Hobby**

Finding time to take up a new hobby together will mean that you will learn something together and interact with each other in new ways. Find something which you both like and set aside some time each week to pursue it.

## **25. Set Aside Time**

Make time for each other every week. You don't have to plan anything grand, just let each other know that you will not make any other commitments and then plan to spend that time doing something you both enjoy and which is only for yourselves. In other words, don't spend that time queuing up to collect your daughter's registered letter from the post office, spend it having coffee together instead! Don't make couple time = chore time!

## **26. Have Breakfast Together**

Start your day together! Even if it is a quick bite at the coffee shop on your way in to work, or perhaps 30 minutes at your dining table each morning, breakfast is a wonderful time to connect. Dinners are often a time when the entire family gets together, but breakfast can be a time for just the two of you.

## **27. Exercise Together**

Some couples find that getting up half an hour early and going for a morning walk, or making time for a weekly jog in the park is a great way to achieve more. What better way is there for you to spend quality time with your spouse and improve your health at the same time!

# Keep In Touch with Your Relatives

As modern families have grown smaller, so too have the number of relatives we each have. Keeping in touch and being there for each other have become more important as family ties have become rarer and more precious.

## 28. Create a Group Chat

Create a group chat with your extended family. Keeping in touch and knowing how everyone is doing becomes a lot easier when everyone is on the same conversational page. Now, when something important happens, you and your relatives need only reach out once to everyone. When you make it easier to know what is happening in each other's lives, you make it easier to appreciate and understand each other.

## 29. Share a Meal Together

Organise a regular meal together. Perhaps this happens once a month or even once a quarter, but the important thing is to make sure that there are regular occasions when you see each other and spend time together.

## 30. Celebrate, Recognize and Appreciate Each Other

Keep track of important events such as family birthdays, job changes, retirements, anniversaries, engagements, graduations, births, and yes, deaths too. Recognise these important events and make time to attend them, organise celebrations for them and be there to support each other. Whilst being a part of the daily lives of your relatives would be difficult, if not intrusive, making sure that you remember milestone events is often appreciated and remembered.

## Key Takeaways

- Make spending time with your family something you do on a daily basis.
- Understand that the type of time you spend should vary according to what each family member needs and is most comfortable with.
- Pick 1 or 2 ways to spend time together and make sure that you commit to these on a long term basis.